

We claim:

1. A method of stabilizing porous silicon comprising the steps of:
preparing a porous silicon structure having a surface terminated with hydrogen atoms; and
5 subjecting said porous silicon structure to organic thermal processing with reactants selected from the group consisting of any unsaturated group ($\text{RCH}=\text{X}$ or $\text{R}^1\text{R}^2\text{C}=\text{X}$, $\text{X}=\text{CH}_2$, O , NR' , S) or nucleophilic center (RNu , $\text{Nu}=\text{OH}$, NHR' , SH , COOH) to substitute said hydrogen atoms with a protective organic layer, and wherein the reactants are purified to free them of peroxide and hydroperoxide impurities prior to
10 said thermal processing and the length of the carbon chains in the reactants is greater than or equal to 8.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said reactants are selected from the group consisting of alkenes and aldehydes.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said organic thermal processing is
15 carried out in the absence of an external catalyst.
4. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said protective organic layer has a thickness is equal to or less than the length of the molecules of said reactants.
- 5 A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein said protective organic monolayer comprises bonds selected from the group consisting of: Si-C and Si-O-C .
- 20 6. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said organic thermal processing comprises reacting said porous silicon structure with reactants selected from the group consisting of: 1-decene, octyl, and decyl aldehydes, ethyl undecylenate, and 1,7-octadiene.
7. A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein said organic thermal processing takes
25 place at a temperature of between 50°C and 250°C .
8. A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein said organic thermal processing at a temperature of between 85°C and 115°C .
9. A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein said porous silicon structure is reacted with 1-decene at 115°C .

10. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein said porous silicon structure is reacted with 1-decene for about sixteen hours.
11. A method as claimed in claim 8, wherein said porous silicon structure is reacted with an aldehyde at about 85°C.
- 5 12. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said reactants are purified prior at said thermal processing step by distillation.
13. A method as claimed in claim 12, wherein prior to thermal processing the silicon structure is rinsed with an organic solvent and then dried.
14. A method as claimed in claim 13, wherein said organic solvent is ethanol.
- 10 15. A method as claimed in claim 13, wherein said silicon structure is dried by exposure to an inert gas flow.
16. A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said inert gas is selected from the group consisting of argon and nitrogen.
17. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the reactants are deoxygenated prior to
15 thermal processing.
18. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein a small amount of oxidation is permitted to occur during said thermal processing.
19. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein said porous silicon structure is thermally reacted with ethyl undecylenate to produce a surface bearing an ester function
20 at the end of an Si layer.
20. A method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said thermal processing takes place at 85°C.
21. A method of making a porous silicon structure, comprising:
treating a silicon wafer in an aqueous acid solution to remove native oxide and
25 produce a hydrogen-terminated surface;
electrochemically etching said hydrogen terminated surface to provide a porous silicon film;
providing a reactant capable of producing a protective organic layer on said structure;

purifying said reactant to remove peroxide and hyperoxide impurities; and
subjecting said porous silicon film to organic thermal processing to substitute said
hydrogen atoms in said hydrogen-terminated surface with a protective organic layer.

22. A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein said reactant is purified by distillation.

5 23. A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein said organic thermal processing takes
place in the absence of an external catalyst.

24. A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein said porous silicon film is subjected to
organic thermal processing at a temperature between 85 and 115°C.

10 25. A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein said protective organic layer is an
organic monolayer of a thickness substantially equally to the length of molecules in said
organic protective layer.

26. A method as claimed in claim 25, wherein said organic monolayer comprises Si-C
and Si-O-C bonds.

15 27. A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein said porous silicon film is reacted with
compounds selected from the group consisting of: 1-decene, octyl, and decyl aldehydes,
ethyl undecylenate, 1,7-octadiene.

28. A bio or chemical sensor comprising a porous silicon structure made by the
process defined in claim 1.

20 29. A bio or chemical sensor comprising a porous silicon structure made by the
process defined in claim 20.

30. A medical device comprising a porous silicon structure made by the process
defined in claim 1.

31. A medical device comprising a porous silicon structure made by the process
defined in claim 20.